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... a monthly bulletin from Canadian Hydrographic Service

About the monthly Water Level bulletin

August Precipitation Over the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term August average:

Great Lakes Basin	93%
Lake Erie (including Lake St. Clair)	66%
Lake Superior	114%
Lakes Michigan-Huron	89%
Lake Ontario	92%

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Below Average Water Levels Persist on the Great Lakes

Water levels of the Great Lakes declined during August and the trend is expected to continue throughout the rest of the year. Although precipitation over parts of the Great Lakes basin was above average last month, high evaporation and low tributary flows kept the water supplies to the lakes low.

The monthly mean level of Lake Superior rose 4 cm from July to August; however, trends in daily water levels suggest the lake has started its seasonal decline. Daily levels rose during the first half of the month peaking at 183.50 m on August 18. Since that time levels have fallen gradually and the lake was at 183.45 m by early September, about 9 cm below the average for that time of year.

Having peaked earlier than Lake Superior, the downward trend in levels is more pronounced on the remaining lakes. From the beginning to the end of August, Lakes Michigan-Huron, St. Clair and Erie daily levels fell 10, 6 and 14 cm, respectively. Since peaking in early July, Lake Ontario continues to fall at a steady pace seeing a drop of about 16 cm from the beginning of August to the end of the month.

Given the continuing below average water level conditions, recreational boaters and marina operators may wish to consider hauling out large boats earlier than usual this Fall. Lakes Michigan-Huron, St. Clair and Erie are all down about 43 cm from last year. Lake Ontario is about 23 cm lower than it was at this time last year.

Levels at the Port of Montréal during August set a new record low for the post-1967 period. Very low flows from Lake Ontario, the Ottawa River and other local tributaries to the St. Lawrence River continue to cause concern for port officials.

While low water levels dominate elsewhere, levels on Lake St. Lawrence just above the Moses-Saunders dam at Cornwall remain above average. Due to the low flows at the dam, levels on Lake St. Lawrence this summer have been above average and about one-half metre higher than the two previous summers. Last month's Lake Ontario outflow was 6290 m^3/s. The last time flow was this low for the month of August was in 1966.

Note: These figures are preliminary.

August Outflows From the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term August average:

Lake Superior	111%
Lake Erie	91%
Lake Huron	93%
Lake Ontario	87%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

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IJC recommends moratorium on bulk removals and sales of Great Lakes water

In its interim report under the Water Uses Reference, released on August 18, 1999, the International Joint Commission (IJC) recommends that, for the next six months while the IJC completes its investigation, U.S. and Canadian federal, state and provincial governments should not authorize or permit any new bulk sales or removals of surface water or groundwater of the Great Lakes basin and should continue to exercise caution with regard to consumptive uses of these waters, in accordance with existing laws in both countries and the Great Lakes Charter.

The interim report responds to the request made by the governments in their February 10, 1999 Water Uses Reference for interim recommendations for the protection of the waters of the Great Lakes. A final report will be submitted to the governments by February 2000, after completion of phase II of the IJC's study. For more information on the interim report and other IJC activities please visit their web site or call Fabien Lengellé of the IJC in Ottawa at (613) 995-0088.

Summary information for "LEVEL*news*"

Why Surf When You Can Dive Into The Great Lakes!

Environment Canada is proud to present OUR GREAT LAKES, the premier source for current and historical information on the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem. OUR GREAT LAKES replaces the Great Lakes Information Management Resource (GLIMR), with improved navigability, a new look and a new name. OUR GREAT LAKES is housed on Ontario Region's Green Lane web site, which promotes and facilitates public access to environmental information.

Building on GLIMR's success, OUR GREAT LAKES provides visitors with a client-driven menu and highlights such items as the Department's current Great Lakes 2000 Program and activities surrounding the next phase of the initiative on the Great Lakes Beyond 2000 page. For current news releases, recently launched web pages and upcoming events, check out What's Making News. If maps interest you, explore Great Maps, for a selection of internally developed maps including the Great Lakes drainage basin and selected areas on the Niagara Peninsula that are susceptible to groundwater contamination.

Additional menu topics include:

- Weather, Climate and Water Levels
- State of the Great Lakes
- Educational Resources, Great Links and Success Stories

We hope you'll visit OUR GREAT LAKES at:
http://www.on.ec.gc.ca/glimr/intro-e.html

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